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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 001397

NOFORN
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/12/2018

TAGS: IR IZ IS SY PHUM PREL PGOV PO

SUBJECT: PORTUGAL'S VIEWS IN ADVANCE OF THE JUNE 16-17
FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING (GAERC)

REF: SECSTATE 62450

Classified By: Dana M. Brown, Pol-Econ Officer, Embassy Lisbon
Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶11. (C/NF) Summary: The Portuguese MFA's Deputy EU Correspondent outlined internal EU disagreements on how best to proceed on Zimbabwe, Cuba, and the Olympics, but underscored that the group was largely united on Iran, the Middle East Peace Process, Democratic Republic of Congo (DROC) and Georgia. Given Ireland's rejection of the EU Treaty of Lisbon last week, however, the meeting will probably only focus on common foreign policy after planning a road forward. End summary.

¶12. (SBU) Iran: Portuguese Deputy EU Correspondent Ana Filomena Rocha reported that Portugal and other EU member states stood ready to implement UN Resolution 1803 sanctions on Iran, but were waiting for a readout on Solana's trip, scheduled for June 13-15. Prior to his departure, Solana reportedly asked EU members to hold off implementing sanctions until he could gauge the viability of negotiations.

Rocha mentioned that Portugal needs the EU's consensus to implement the UN sanctions into national law and admitted that the current situation leaves the GOP in legal limbo.

¶13. (C/NF) Israeli-Palestinian Peace: Rocha offered a pessimistic outlook for the peace process and said conditions were worsening. She remarked that Israel's efforts to talk with Syria via Turkey boded ill for negotiations with the Palestinians. "Olmert is too weak to make any gestures at this point," Rocha judged.

¶14. (C) Zimbabwe: Portugal admits that the runoff election will likely be manipulated and corrupt, but opposes criticizing the South African Development Community (SADC) observer delegation for its shortcomings. Rocha conceded that the SADC group was delayed, understaffed, and viewed by some as biased, but added that criticizing the observers at this point would only undermine the EU-supported group.

¶15. (C/NF) Cuba: Portugal is strongly in favor of removing sanctions and beginning an EU-Cuba dialogue, according to Rocha. After criticizing the Czech Republic and Sweden for blocking consensus, Rocha said that it would likely be resolved at the GAERC meeting, if not late this week. She stressed that Cuba was making some progress and that it was time to encourage it.

¶16. (U) W. Balkans: Rocha said discussion on the Western Balkans would not be held until June 19.

¶17. (SBU) Democratic Republic of Congo (DROC): Belgium's relations were strained recently over a diplomatic dispute and the closure of two consulates, so Belgium requested that the agenda include a discussion on the DROC, according to Rocha. She added that the relations between the DROC and the EU had worsened over the last year due to Kabila's inability

to improve the security situation, ongoing violence in the Eastern province, and lackluster cooperation with the EU on development projects.

¶18. (C) Georgia: Rocha reported that Solana's recent meeting with Georgian leaders was tense, as he had pressed the Georgians to "do their own dirty work" in dealing with the Russians, but offered no further details.

¶19. (U) Miscellaneous: The ministers will discuss logistical details on how best to set up the EU Foreign Service, including the contributions, integration plans, and number of seconded participants. Rocha also noted that the meeting would attempt to coordinate the EU's political representation at the Olympics this August to ensure some standardization. She doubted those efforts would be successful.

¶10. (U) Comment: As a result of Ireland's vote against treaty ratification last week, Portugal's interest at this GAERC will be fully on preserving its 2007 EU presidency legacy. The vote is already being cited as a defeat by opposition parties, so FM Amado is sure to focus all his attention on getting the process back on track. End comment.
Stephenson